

23 Referees Named for November Autumn Internationals Window

World Rugby has unveiled the list of 23 referees representing 11 different nations who will officiate during the 34 test matches scheduled for the November 2025 Autumn Internationals window. For national teams, this period carries major importance as they chase valuable ranking points ahead of the Men's Rugby World Cup 2027 draw in December.

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Yet, the stakes are equally significant for the match officials, whose selections hint at long-term planning and a glance toward future tournaments. The latest appointments blend experienced international referees with fresh officiating talent, signalling World Rugby's intent to develop depth ahead of the Autumn Internationals 2025 and in preparation for the next Rugby World Cup.

Among the new faces stepping into the global spotlight are Gianluca Gnecci (Italy), Tomas Bertazza (Argentina), Morne Ferreira (South Africa), Adam Leal (England), Ben Breakspear (Wales), Sam Grove-White (Scotland), and Jeremy Rozier (France). Their inclusion highlights a balanced approach between seasoned authority and emerging promise.

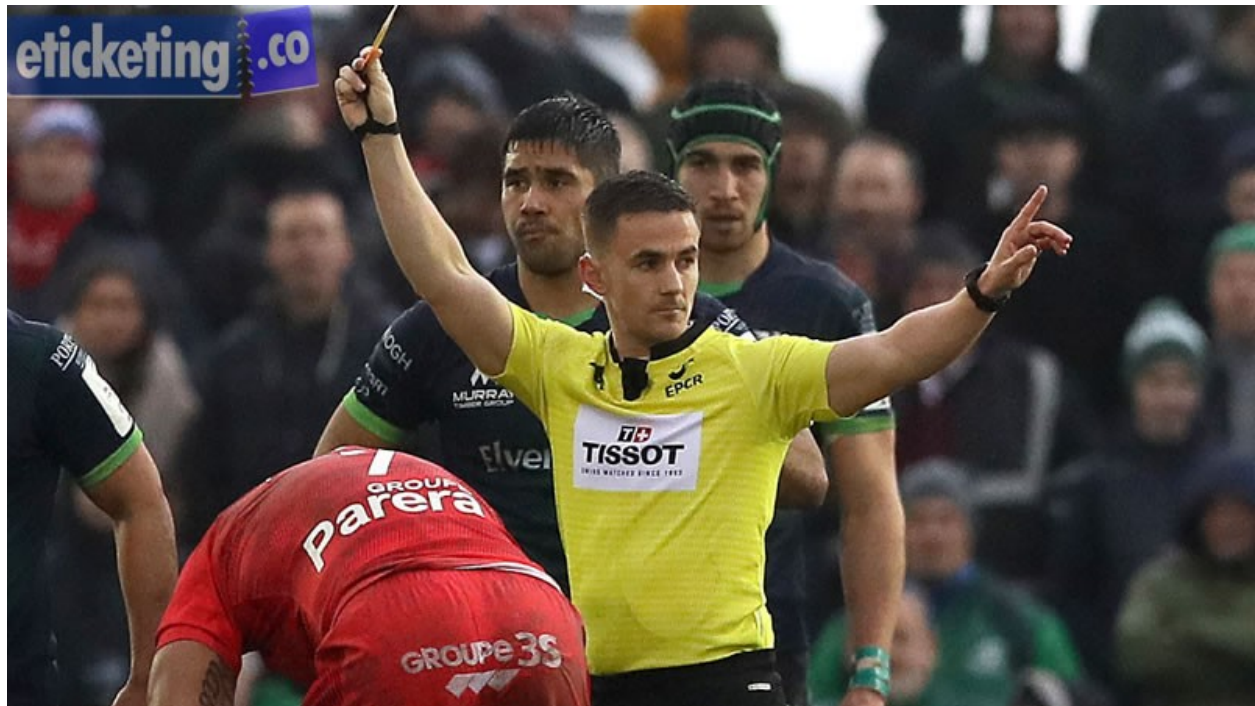
Adding intrigue, Hollie Davidson, who officiated the Women's Rugby World Cup 2025 final, returns to the men's circuit for two high-profile fixtures during the Autumn Internationals one in Portugal, followed by Wales versus New Zealand in

Cardiff on November 22. Davidson's selection during the 2025 Autumn Internationals reflects the growing recognition of elite female referees within men's test rugby.

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Autumn Internationals 2025: Referee Assignments Finalized

Alongside the 34 test encounters, eight additional non-test matches expand the officiating list, pushing the total to 58 officials from 15 national unions. Morgan White from Hong Kong China will take charge of the first non-test clash between Japan XV and Australia A on October 18, while Ben O'Keeffe of New Zealand opens the test window proper with Japan vs Australia in Tokyo a week later.



The window will close under Luc Ramos of France, who will oversee the final contest of the Autumn Internationals 2025, with Wales hosting South Africa in Cardiff on November 29. Ten referees will handle two tests each, mostly from the southern hemisphere, maximizing opportunities while they operate in northern conditions during the Autumn Internationals 2025.

Meanwhile, appointments for the Final Qualification Tournament which will decide the 24th and final entrant for the Men's Rugby World Cup 2027 will be confirmed once the fourth team joining Belgium, Namibia, and Samoa is finalized on October 18. That qualifying event will run in Dubai from December 13-18.

As the international calendar intensifies, England head coach Steve Borthwick looks ahead to five major campaigns before the 2027 World Cup warm-ups begin. That stretch could amount to around 21 test matches, offering him both a laboratory for experimentation and a measure of consistency. But one persistent talking point remains unresolved the identity of England's first-choice fly-half.

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England Vs Fiji: Borthwick Evaluates Fly-Half Trio Ahead of Autumn Series

By naming George Ford, Fin Smith, and Marcus Smith in the enhanced Elite Player Squad contracts last year, Borthwick made it clear how highly he rates his trio of playmakers. In his most recent training squad, all three were again included, reflecting his belief in their differing skill sets and the important roles they may play during the upcoming Autumn Internationals.

When all were last available simultaneously, Borthwick managed to fit both Smiths and Ford into a single match-day 23, which paid dividends as England scored 10 tries and defeated Wales 68-14. Whether Borthwick revisits that bold pattern during the autumn series, start against Australia on November 1, remains to be seen. It's a query that continues to fascinate supporters and pundits alike.



At the club level, Harlequins head coach Jason Gilmore has been vocal about Marcus Smith's role, describing him as the team's quarterback and confirming his

preference to keep the fly-half in his natural position rather than shifting him to full-back. Gilmore has also emphasized improved kicking execution, a focus that paid off during Harlequins' win over Saracens, where Smith kicked 18 times six more than any other player on the field.

The victory came through aerial precision, with Rodrigo Isgró and others competing fiercely for high balls, creating both of Harlequins' tries from spilled catches. Although one score was ruled out when the ball was judged to have exited the tunnel, Smith's footwork and control were unique, showcasing the kind of acuity England will rely on in major fixtures such as England vs Fiji during the upcoming international season.

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